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SUBJECT: MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE - FOCUS ON ARMS CONTROL

SUMMARY

1. (U) Flanked by well-received calls for a renewed push for arms control and disarmament by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and U.S. Representative Ellen Tauscher, German FM Steinmeier used the Munich Security Conference (MSC) as a platform to reiterate his arms control agenda and to emphasize that a "zero solution" on nuclear weapons is possible. The NPT, CFE, INF and ABM were discussed during the arms control panel, the conference's first panel. While most participants and panelists agreed that the start of a new U.S. Administration represented an opportunity for reviving arms control and nonproliferation efforts, few concrete proposals were offered. Steinmeier in particular described 2009 as an opportunity to bring arms control back to the fore of the international agenda and described arms control and nonproliferation as "two sides of the same coin." A number of conference participants mentioned that the international community is anxiously awaiting renewed U.S. leadership on this issue. (Other MSC issues reported SEPTELS.) END SUMMARY.

U.S. PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS WELL-RECEIVED

2. (U) Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger -- in Munich to receive the newly established Ewald von Kleist Award for his "significant contribution to global peace and conflict resolution" -- spoke broadly about arms control and the need for a renewed emphasis on what he termed "a bipartisan" arms control agenda. He called on the U.S. and Russia to work more closely on missile defense and alluded frequently to his hopes for a nuclear-free world. He reminded the audience of his impeccable credentials as a defender of U.S. and Western security. Kissinger's well-known articles from the Wall Street Journal and advocacy on behalf of a nuclear-free world seemed to ensure that his comments would be welcome by the international audience in Munich.

3. (U) Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher (D-CA), took the place of Senator John Kerry (who remained in DC to work on the stimulus package) and delivered well-received closing remarks on the conference's first day. Rep. Tauscher called for a new debate on the role of nuclear weapons and the need for a new defense strategy for the United States, with an eye toward "reducing the size of our global nuclear arsenal." She also called for efforts to repair the "badly damaged arms control regime" including the negotiation of the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty, ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and a successful 2010 NPT Review Conference.

NPT

4. (U) Steinmeier reiterated his call for the "multilateralization"

of the nuclear fuel cycle to prevent countries from creating national enrichment facilities. Looking forward to the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference, he asserted that the world could not afford another five years without further progress on fulfilling the disarmament goals of the NPT. He noted how important it is to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology in the Middle East. Russian Deputy PM Sergei Ivanov noted that Russia's top NPT priority remains increasing the treaty's efficiency. Representative Tauscher called for automatic sanctions for countries that disregard their NPT commitments.

START I

15. (U) Steinmeier expressed hope that a successful extension or follow-on to START I could facilitate U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Sergey Ivanov told the conference that Russia offered the United States back in 2005 to work on a successor agreement to START I, but to no avail. Ivanov pointed at the "capability problem" -- the question when a nuclear weapon is considered dismantled -- as the major issue. Ivanov hopes to get a positive response on the issue from the U.S. administration. According to Ivanov, Russia expects a START follow-on agreement to be legally binding. He also called for a ban of weapons in space.

CFE

16. (U) German Chancellor Merkel described the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) as a "central point" of arms control while Steinmeier stated -- without irony -- that the war in Georgia demonstrated the relevance of the CFE. He referred to the CFE as a treaty that remains valid despite the suspension of Russia's implementation, and he called for "developing" the CFE regime as an instrument for "minimizing the danger of regional conflict." Steinmeier reiterated plans to host a meeting of senior CFE experts in Berlin in June of this year to develop "concrete proposals" in this regard. Ivanov, meanwhile, blamed NATO policy for Russia's suspension of the CFE treaty. He indicated an openness to talk about the restoration of conventional arms control in Europe, but also added that time is working against NATO's position and the CFE itself.

CTBT

17. (U) Steinmeier welcomed the U.S. government's intention to send the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to the Senate for ratification a positive signal for arms control. Ivanov pointedly noted that Russia ratified the CTBT back in 2000. He urged all countries to ratify the CTBT.

MULTILATERALIZATION OF THE INF TREATY

18. (U) Ivanov highlighted the U.S.-Russia initiative to multilateralize the INF treaty, noting that several other countries, including North Korea, China, Pakistan, India, Iran and Israel, have acquired capabilities that would be regulated under an expanded INF treaty. He noted that Russia shares a border with nearly all those nations. He also thanked the U.S. for its role in supporting this issue.

ABM TREATY / MISSILE DEFENSE

19. (U) Asked about the ABM treaty, Ivanov emphasized that the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty had been a unilateral U.S. decision. He suggested that it should be possible to get a successor agreement to ABM once a joint assessment of all external threats is completed. Steinmeier said the Russian suspension of plans to deploy Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad provided an opening to seek an agreed solution among the U.S., Russia and Europe regarding the planned U.S. MD system in Europe. "When it concerns common threats, then common responses must also be possible."

ZERO SOLUTION FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS

¶10. (U) FM Steinmeier referred to the proposal by former U.S. officials Kissinger, Nunn, Schultz and Perry and what he referred to as the response by elder German statesmen (von Weizsaecker, Bahr, Schmidt and Genscher) as proof that it is possible to work actively toward a world without nuclear weapons. He recommended a step-by-step approach to reduce nuclear weapons, calling for nuclear weapons states to disarm. IAEA Director General Mohammed elBaradei made a number of recommendations to get to a global zero on nuclear weapons, including a reduction of the dependence on nuclear weapons; the establishment of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT); the ratification of the CTBT; a change in the deployment status of nuclear weapons; and the establishment of a multinational enrichment site. Interestingly, Russia's Ivanov did not touch upon the issue of a possible zero solution on nuclear weapons.

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